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Lead Article

Immigration, Acculturation, and Adaptation

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La psychologie interculturelle a montré qu'il existait des rapports étroits entre le contexte culturel et le développement comportemental de l'individu. Cette relation établie, l'effort des recherches interculturelles a de plus en plus porté sur ce qu'il advenait des individus quand ils tentaient de refaire leur vie dans une culture différente de leur culture d'origine. Les conséquences psychologiques à long terme de ce processus d'acculturation sont très variables, dépendant de variables sociales et personnelles qui renvoient à la société de départ, à la société d'accueil et à des phénomènes qui existent avant, mais qui émergent pendant la période d'acculturation. Cet article esquisse un schéma conceptuel à partir duquel acculturation et adaptation peuvent être étudiées, puis présente quelques conclusions et résultats généraux tirés d'un échantillon de travaux empiriques. On envisage des applications possibles à la politique et aux programmes d'insertion en prenant en considération les coûts et les bénéfices sociaux et psychologiques émanant de l'adoption d'une orientation pluraliste et intégrationniste.

Cross-cultural psychology has demonstrated important links between cultural context and individual behavioural development. Given this relationship, cross-cultural research has increasingly investigated what happens to individuals who have developed in one cultural context when they attempt to re-establish their lives in another one. The long-term psychological consequences of this process of acculturation are highly variable, depending on social and personal variables that reside in the society of origin, the society of settlement, and phenomena that both exist prior to, and arise during, the course of acculturation. This article outlines a conceptual framework within which acculturation and adaptation can be investigated, and then presents some general findings and conclusions based on a sample of empirical studies.

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Applications to public policy and programmes are proposed, along with a consideration of the social and psychological costs and benefits of adopting a pluralist and integrationist orientation to these issues.

INTRODUCTION

The central aim of the field of cross-cultural psychology has been to demonstrate the influence that cultural factors have on the development and display of individual human behaviour. Many psychologists working in this field have concluded that there is now substantial evidence to document the outcome of this culture–behaviour relationship: individuals generally act in ways that correspond to cultural influences and expectations (Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 1992). There are two matters of obvious interest to applied psychologists stemming from the demonstration of such relationships. One is to seek ways in which this knowledge may be applied both generally (e.g. Berry & Lonner, 1975; Brislin, 1990) and to specific public policy areas such as multiculturalism (e.g. Berry, 1984), health (e.g. Dasen, Berry, & Sartorius, 1988) and education (e.g. Eldering & Kloprogge, 1989; Ogbu, 1990).

A second matter of interest is the very practical question: What happens to individuals, who have developed in one cultural context, when they attempt to live in a new cultural context? If culture is such a powerful shaper of behaviour, do individuals continue to act in the new setting as they did in the previous one, do they change their behavioural repertoire to be more appropriate in the new setting, or is there some complex pattern of continuity and change in how people go about their lives in the new society? The answer provided by cross-cultural psychology is very clearly supportive of the last of these three alternatives.

How cross-cultural psychology arrived at this conclusion has involved a substantial amount of research over the past decades, and now has considerable potential for application in areas of social policy. This article has three main sections: the first defines the concepts, and displays the issues; the second outlines some of the empirical evidence; and the third indicates the most useful areas of potential application. The focus is on how individuals who have developed in one cultural context manage to adapt to new contexts that result from migration. The concept of *acculturation* is employed to refer to the cultural changes resulting from these group encounters, while the concepts of *psychological acculturation* and *adaptation* are employed to refer to the psychological changes and eventual outcomes that occur as a result of individuals experiencing acculturation. Three interrelated aspects of adaptation are identified: *psychological*, *sociocultural*, and *economic*. As this is a massive and rapidly changing field, the coverage is necessarily selective, and possibly biased, in its content and perspectives. The literatures pertaining to migrant peoples (including

immigrants, sojourners, and refugees), especially in adaptation to North America, Australia, and to a lesser extent to Europe are emphasised; largely absent are studies in Asian, African, and South American settings (where, in fact, most acculturation has taken place). This bias reflects the availability of literature for some peoples of the world, but not for others.

SOME BASIC CONCEPTS

Many theoretical perspectives have been advanced during the study of cultural transitions. However, some common meanings have emerged, and are now widely shared.

Acculturation

The classical definition of *acculturation* was presented by Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936, p.149): "acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups". Although acculturation is a neutral term in principle (that is, change may take place in either or both groups), in practice acculturation tends to induce more change in one of the groups (termed the *acculturating group* in this article) than in the other (Berry, 1990a).

A later discussion (Social Science Research Council, 1954) emphasised that *assimilation* is not the only kind of acculturation; it can also be *reactive* (triggering resistance to change in both groups), *creative* (stimulating new cultural forms, not found in either of the cultures in contact), and *delayed* (initiating changes that appear more fully years later).

A distinction has been made by Graves (1967), between acculturation as a collective or group-level phenomenon, and *psychological acculturation*. In the former, acculturation is a change in the *culture* of the group; in the latter, acculturation is a change in the *psychology* of the individual. This distinction between levels is important for two reasons: first, in order to examine the systematic relationships between these two sets of variables; and second, because not all individuals participate to the same extent in the general acculturation being experienced by their group. While the general changes may be profound in the group, individuals are known to vary greatly in the degree to which they participate in these community changes (Berry, 1970; Furnham & Bochner, 1986).

The concept of acculturation has become widely used in cross-cultural psychology and has also been the subject of criticism because of the gradual erosion of the original meaning of the concept (as outlined earlier) so that it became synonymous with *assimilation* (e.g. Vasquez, 1984). A parallel conceptualisation has been developed, mainly among French-language

scholars: *interculturation* (see Camilleri, 1990; Clanet, 1990). The concept is defined (Clanet, 1990, p.70; our translation) as "the set of processes by which individuals and groups interact when they identify themselves as culturally distinct". There are evident similarities between the *acculturation* and *interculturation* approaches, and it is often difficult in practice to distinguish the research done, or the conclusions drawn from the two approaches. One distinguishing feature, however, is the interest in the formation of new cultures in the interculturation, more than in the acculturation, approach. Given these rather broad similarities, this article will employ the term acculturation to refer to the general processes and outcomes (both cultural and psychological) of intercultural contact.

Plural Societies

As a result of immigration, many societies become *culturally plural*. That is, people of many cultural backgrounds come to live together in a diverse society. In many cases they form cultural groups that are not equal in power (numerical, economic, or political). These power differences have given rise to popular and social science terms such as "mainstream", "minority", "ethnic group" etc. In this article, while recognising the unequal influences and changes that exist during acculturation, I employ the term *cultural group* to refer to all groups, and the terms *dominant* and *non-dominant* to refer to their relative power where such a difference exists and is relevant to the discussion. This is an attempt to avoid a host of political and social assumptions that have distorted much of the work on psychological acculturation, in particular the assumption that "minorities" are inevitably (or should be in the process of) becoming part of the "mainstream" culture. Although this does occur in many plural societies, it does not always occur, and in some cases it is resisted by either or both the dominant and non-dominant cultural groups, resulting in the continuing cultural diversity of so many contemporary societies (Kymlicka, 1995; UNESCO, 1985).

Many kinds of cultural groups may exist in plural societies and their variety is primarily due to three factors: *voluntariness*, *mobility*, and *permanence*. Some groups have entered into the acculturation process voluntarily (e.g. immigrants) while others experience acculturation without having sought it out (e.g. refugees, indigenous peoples). Other groups are in contact because they have migrated to a new location (e.g. immigrants and refugees), while others have had the new culture brought to them (e.g. indigenous peoples and "national minorities"). And third, among those who have migrated, some are relatively permanently settled into the process (e.g. immigrants), while for others the situation is a temporary one (e.g. sojourners such as international students and guest workers, or asylum seekers who may eventually be deported).

Despite these variations in factors leading to acculturation, one of the conclusions that has been reached (Berry & Sam, 1996) is that the basic *process* of adaptation appears to be common to all these groups. What varies is the course, the level of difficulty, and to some extent the eventual outcome of acculturation; the three factors of voluntariness, mobility, and permanence, and others to be reviewed later, all contribute to this variation. Thus, although this article is mainly concerned with immigrants, many of the findings and conclusions have some degree of generalisability to other kinds of acculturating groups.

Acculturation Strategies

In all plural societies, cultural groups and their individual members, in both the dominant and non-dominant situations, must deal with the issue of *how* to acculturate. Strategies with respect to two major issues are usually worked out by groups and individuals in their daily encounters with each other. These issues are: *cultural maintenance* (to what extent are cultural identity and characteristics considered to be important, and their maintenance strived for); and *contact and participation* (to what extent should they become involved in other cultural groups, or remain primarily among themselves).

When these two underlying issues are considered simultaneously, a conceptual framework (Fig. 1) is generated which posits four acculturation strategies. These two issues can be responded to on attitudinal dimensions, represented by bipolar arrows. For purposes of presentation, generally positive or negative ("yes" or "no" responses) to these issues intersect to define four acculturation strategies. These strategies carry different names, depending on which group (the dominant or non-dominant) is being considered. From the point of view of non-dominant groups, when individuals do not wish to maintain their cultural identity and seek daily interaction with other cultures, the *Assimilation* strategy is defined. In contrast, when individuals place a value on holding on to their original culture, and at the same time wish to avoid interaction with others, then the *Separation* alternative is defined. When there is an interest in both maintaining one's original culture, while in daily interactions with other groups, *Integration* is the option; here, there is some degree of cultural integrity maintained, while at the same time seeking to participate as an integral part of the larger social network. Finally, when there is little possibility or interest in cultural maintenance (often for reasons of enforced cultural loss), and little interest in having relations with others (often for reasons of exclusion or discrimination) then *Marginalisation* is defined.

This presentation was based on the assumption that non-dominant groups and their individual members have the freedom to choose how they

want to acculturate. This, of course, is not always the case (Berry, 1974). When the dominant group enforces certain forms of acculturation, or constrains the choices of non-dominant groups or individuals, then other terms need to be used. Most clearly, people may sometimes choose the Separation option; but when it is required of them by the dominant society, the situation is one of *Segregation*. Similarly, when people choose to Assimilate, the notion of the *Melting Pot* may be appropriate; but when forced to do so, it becomes more like a *Pressure Cooker*. In the case of Marginalisation, people rarely choose such an option; rather they usually become marginalised as a result of attempts at forced assimilation (Pressure Cooker) combined with forced exclusion (Segregation); thus no other term seems to be required beyond the single notion of Marginalisation.

Integration can only be "freely" chosen and successfully pursued by non-dominant groups when the dominant society is open and inclusive in its orientation towards cultural diversity (Berry, 1991). Thus, a *mutual accommodation* is required for integration to be attained, involving the acceptance by both groups of the right of all groups to live as culturally different peoples. This strategy requires non-dominant groups to adopt the

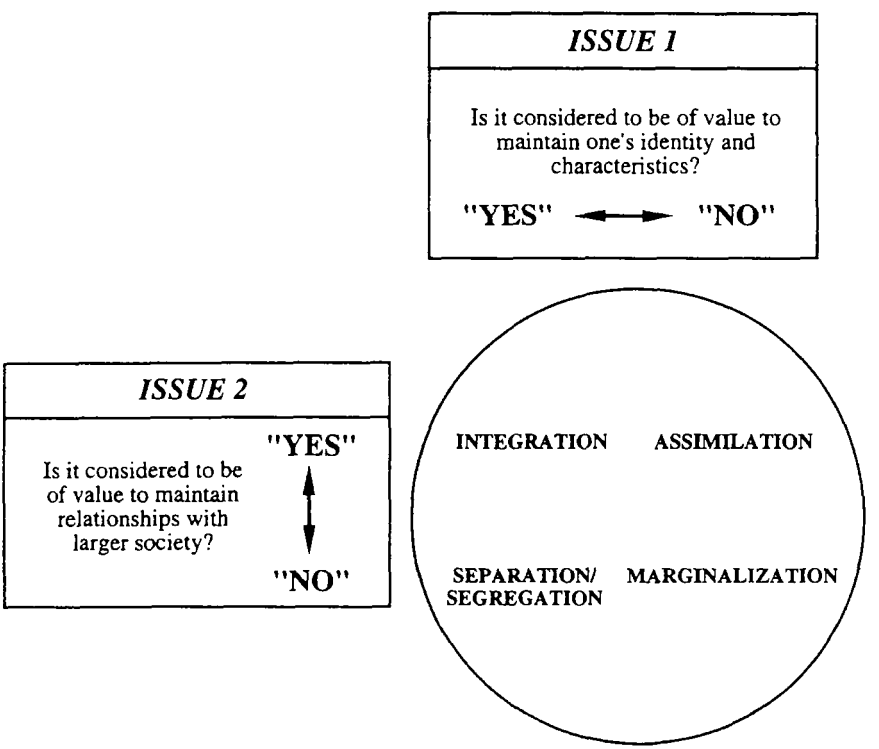

FIG. 1. Acculturation strategies.

basic values of the larger society, while at the same time the dominant group must be prepared to adapt national institutions (e.g. education, health, labour) to better meet the needs of all groups now living together in the plural society.

Obviously, the integration strategy can only be pursued in societies that are explicitly *multicultural*, in which certain psychological pre-conditions are established (Berry & Kalin, 1995). These pre-conditions are: the widespread acceptance of the value to a society of cultural diversity (i.e. the presence of a positive "multicultural ideology"); relatively low levels of prejudice (i.e. minimal ethnocentrism, racism, and discrimination); positive mutual attitudes among cultural groups (i.e. no specific intergroup hatreds); and a sense of attachment to, or identification with, the larger society by all groups (Kalin & Berry, in press).

Just as obviously, integration (and separation) can only be pursued when other members of one's ethnocultural group share in the wish to maintain the group's cultural heritage. In this sense, these two strategies are "collective", whereas assimilation is more "individualistic" (Lalonde & Cameron, 1993; Moghaddam, 1988). Other constraints on one's choice of acculturation strategy have also been noted. For example those whose physical features set them apart from the society of settlement (e.g. Koreans in Canada, or Turks in Germany) may experience prejudice and discrimination, and thus be reluctant to pursue assimilation (Berry et al., 1989).

Individuals and groups may hold varying *attitudes* towards these four ways of acculturating, and their actual *behaviours* may vary correspondingly. Together, these attitudes and behaviours comprise what we have called *acculturation strategies* (Berry, 1990a). Attitudes towards (preferences for) these four alternatives have been measured in numerous studies (reviewed in Berry et al., 1989). National policies and programmes may also be analysed in terms of these four approaches (Berry, 1990b): some are clearly assimilationist, expecting all immigrant and ethnocultural groups to become like those in the dominant society; others are integrationist, willing (even pleased) to accept and incorporate all groups to a large extent on their own cultural terms; yet others have pursued segregationist policies; and others have sought the marginalisation of unwanted groups.

Other terms than those used here have been proposed by acculturation researchers (e.g. Gordon, 1964). In particular, the term "bicultural" has been employed to refer to acculturation that involves the individual simultaneously in the two cultures that are in contact (Cameron & Lalonde, 1994; LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1963; Padilla, 1980; Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1993); this concept corresponds closely to the integration strategy as defined here. Similarly, Gordon (1964) refers to two forms of incorporation: cultural assimilation and structural assimilation. In our terms,

when both forms occur, complete assimilation is likely to result; however, when structural assimilation is present (a high degree of contact and participation) combined with a low degree of cultural assimilation (a high degree of cultural maintenance), then an outcome similar to integration is likely.

Three other issues require commentary before proceeding, as preferences for one acculturation strategy over others are known to vary, depending on context and time period (e.g. length of residence, or generational status). First, there is usually an overall coherent preference for one particular strategy (as evidenced by Cronbach alpha coefficients in the .70 to .80 range; see Berry et al., 1989). However, there can also be variation according to one's location: in more private spheres or domains (such as the home, the extended family, the ethnic community) more cultural maintenance may be sought than in more public spheres (such as the workplace, or in politics); and there may be less intergroup contact sought in private spheres than in the more public ones. Second, the broader national context may affect acculturation strategies, such that in explicitly multicultural societies individuals may seek to match such a policy with a personal preference for integration; or in assimilationist societies, acculturation may be easiest by adopting an assimilation strategy for oneself (Krishnan & Berry, 1992). That is, individuals may well be constrained in their choice of strategy, even to the point where there is a very limited role for personal preference. Indeed, when personal preferences are in conflict with national policies, stress may well be the result (Horenczyk, 1996). Third, there is evidence that during the course of development, and over the period of major acculturation, individuals explore various strategies, eventually settling on one that is more useful and satisfying than the others (Kim, 1988); however, as far as is known, there is no set sequence or age at which different strategies are used (Ho, 1995).

Psychological Acculturation

It had been previously thought that acculturation inevitably brings social and psychological problems (Malzberg & Lee, 1956). However, such a negative and broad generalisation no longer appears to be valid (Murphy, 1965; Berry & Kim, 1988; Jayasuriya, Sang, & Fielding, 1992; Westermeyer, 1986), with social and psychological outcomes now known to be highly variable. Three main points of view can be identified in acculturation research, each suggesting a different level of difficulty for the individual. The first is one that considers psychological changes to be rather easy to accomplish; this approach has been referred to variously as "behavioural shifts" by Berry (1980), "culture learning" by Brislin, Landis, and Brandt (1983), and "social skills acquisition" by Furnham and Bochner (1986).

Here, psychological adaptations to acculturation are considered to be a matter of learning a new behavioural repertoire that is appropriate for the new cultural context. This also requires some "culture shedding" (Berry, 1992) to occur (the *un*learning of aspects of one's previous repertoire that are no longer appropriate); and it may be accompanied by some moderate "culture conflict" (where incompatible behaviours create difficulties for the individual).

In cases where serious conflict exists, then a second point of view is the appropriate one; here individuals may experience "culture shock" (Oberg, 1960) or "acculturative stress" (Berry, 1970; Berry, Kim, Minde, & Mok, 1987) if they cannot easily change their repertoire. Although the "culture shock" concept is older and has wide popular acceptance, I prefer the "acculturative stress" conceptualisation, for three reasons. One is that it is closely linked to psychological models of stress (e.g. Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) as a response to environmental stressors (which, in the present case, reside in the experience of acculturation), and thus has some theoretical foundation. The second is that "shock" suggests the presence of only negative experiences and outcomes of intercultural contact (cf. the "shell shock" notion popular earlier as a psychological outcome of war experiences). However, during acculturation only moderate difficulties are usually experienced (such as some psychosomatic problems), as other psychological processes (such as problem appraisal and coping strategies) are usually available to the acculturating individual (Vega & Rumbaut, 1991). Third, the source of the problems that do arise are not cultural, but intercultural, residing in the process of acculturation.

When major difficulties are experienced, then the "psychopathology" or "mental disease" perspective is most appropriate (Malzberg & Lee, 1956; Murphy, 1965; WHO, 1991). Here, changes in the cultural context exceed the individual's capacity to cope, because of the magnitude, speed, or some other aspect of the change, leading to serious psychological disturbances, such as clinical depression, and incapacitating anxiety (Berry & Kim, 1988; Jayasuriya et al., 1992).

Adaptation

In its most general sense, *adaptation* refers to changes that take place in individuals or groups in response to environmental demands. These adaptations can occur immediately, or they can be extended over the longer term. Short-term changes during acculturation are sometimes negative and often disruptive in character. However, for most acculturating individuals, after a period of time, some long-term positive adaptation to the new cultural context usually takes place (Beiser et al., 1988). Depending on a variety of factors, these adaptations can take many different forms.

Sometimes there is increased "fit" between the acculturating individual and the new context (e.g. when the assimilation or integration strategies are pursued, and when attitudes in the dominant society are accepting of the acculturating individual and group). Sometimes, however, a "fit" is not achieved (as in separation/segregation and marginalisation) and the groups settle into a pattern of conflict, with resultant acculturative stress or psychopathology.

In the recent literature on psychological adaptation to acculturation, a distinction has been drawn between *psychological* and *sociocultural* adaptation (Searle & Ward, 1990). The first refers to a set of internal psychological outcomes including a clear sense of personal and cultural identity, good mental health, and the achievement of personal satisfaction in the new cultural context; the second is a set of external psychological outcomes that link individuals to their new context, including their ability to deal with daily problems, particularly in the areas of family life, work and school. Although these two forms of adaptation are usually related empirically, there are two reasons for keeping them conceptually distinct. One is that factors predicting these two types of adaptation are often different (Ward, 1996); the other is that psychological adaptation may best be analysed within the context of the stress and psychopathology approaches, while sociocultural adaptation is more closely linked to the social skills framework (Ward & Kennedy, 1993a). A third adaptive outcome has recently been introduced: *economic adaptation* (Aycan & Berry, 1996). This refers to the degree to which work is obtained, is satisfying and is effective in the new culture.

ACCULTURATION FRAMEWORK

The complex literature on acculturation has been the subject of numerous conceptual frameworks; these have attempted to systematise the process of acculturation and to illustrate the main factors that affect an individual's adaptation. In Fig. 2, one such framework (cf. Berry, 1992) is presented (see also Berry, 1976; Berry, Trimble & Olmedo, 1986; Olmedo, 1979; Rogler, 1994; Ward, 1996).

On the left of Fig. 2 are group- or cultural-level phenomena, which are mainly *situational* variables; while to the right are individual- or psychological-level phenomena which are predominantly *person* variables. Along the top are features that exist prior to acculturation taking place, while along the bottom are those that arise during the process of acculturation. Through the middle of the framework are the main group and psychological acculturation phenomena; these flow from left to right beginning with the cultural groups in contact bringing about changes in many of their collective features (e.g. political, economic, social structures),

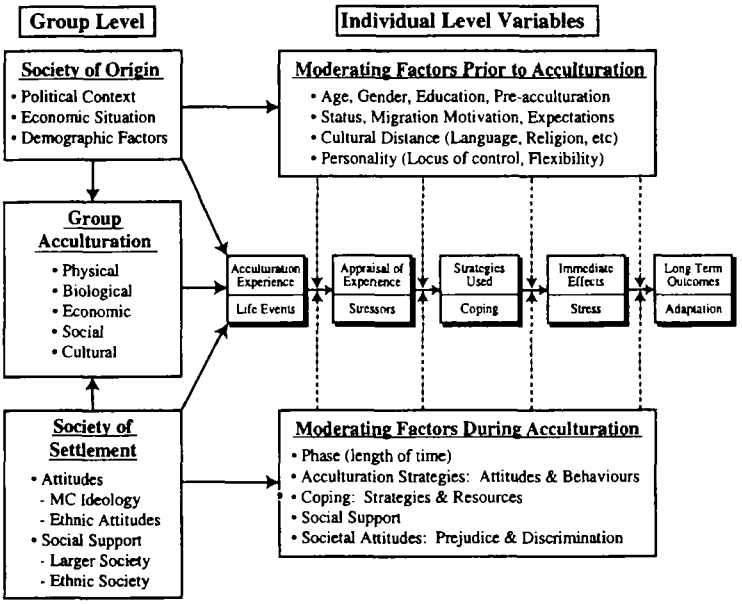

FIG. 2. A framework for acculturation research.

then affecting the individual who is experiencing acculturation (resulting in a number of possible psychological experiences and changes, leading finally to a person's adaptation. The framework in Fig. 2 combines both *structural* and *process* features: the central portion flowing from group acculturation through individual acculturation to adaptation is clearly a process taking place over time; factors in the upper and lower levels influencing this process provide the broad structure in which acculturation takes place.

Contemporary reviews of the literature (Berry & Sam, 1996; Ward, 1996) show that this central flow is highly variable: the nature of a person's psychological acculturation and eventual adaptation depends on specific features of the group-level factors (on the left) and of the moderating influence (shown by the dotted lines) of individual factors that exist prior to, or arise during, acculturation (at the top and bottom).

With respect to the structuring of relationships, the model includes both *mediating* and *moderating* variables (Baron & Kenny, 1986); some variables may serve as both. For example, coping strategies serve as a mediator when they link stressors to the stress reaction, and as a moderator when they affect the degree of relationship between stressors and stress (Frese, 1986).

The main point of the framework is to show the key variables that should be attended to when carrying out studies of psychological acculturation. It is contended that any study that ignores any of these broad classes of variables will be incomplete, and will be unable to comprehend individuals who are

experiencing acculturation. For example, research that does not attend to the cultural and psychological characteristics that individuals bring to the process, merely characterising them by name (e.g. as "Vietnamese", or "Somali", or even less helpfully as "minorities" or "immigrants"), cannot hope to understand their acculturation or adaptation. Similarly, research that ignores key features of the dominant society (such as demography, immigration policies, and attitudes towards immigrants) is also incomplete. However, it is important to note that there is no single study that has incorporated or verified all aspects of the framework in Fig. 2; it is a composite framework, assembling concepts and findings from numerous smaller-scale studies.

To expand on Fig. 2, we consider in detail the various situational and personal factors that are now widely believed to influence psychological acculturation.

Society of Origin

A complete study of acculturation would need to start with a fairly comprehensive examination of the two societal contexts: that of origin and that of settlement. In the society of origin, the cultural characteristics that accompany individuals into the acculturation process need description, in part to understand (literally) where the person is coming from, and in part to establish cultural features for comparison with the society of settlement as a basis for estimating an important factor to be discussed later, that of *cultural distance*. The combination of political, economic, and demographic conditions being faced by individuals in their society of origin also needs to be studied as a basis for understanding the degree of *voluntariness* in the *migration motivation* of acculturating individuals. Recent arguments by Richmond (1993) suggest that migrants can be ranged on a continuum between *reactive* and *proactive*, with the former being motivated by factors that are constraining or exclusionary, and generally negative in character, while the latter are motivated by factors that are facilitating or enabling, and generally positive in character; these contrasting factors have also been referred to as *push/pull* factors in the earlier literature on migration motivation.

Society of Settlement

In the society of settlement, a number of factors have importance. First there are the general orientations a society and its citizens have towards immigration and pluralism. Some have been built by immigration over the centuries, and this process may be a continuing one, guided by a deliberate immigration policy (Sabatier & Berry, 1994). The important issue to understand for the process of acculturation is both the historical and

attitudinal situation faced by migrants in the society of settlement. Some societies are accepting of cultural pluralism resulting from immigration, taking steps to support the continuation of cultural diversity as a shared communal resource; this position represents a positive *multicultural ideology* (Berry & Kalin, 1995) and corresponds to the integration strategy in Fig. 1. Others seek to eliminate diversity through policies and programmes of assimilation, while others attempt to segregate or marginalise diverse populations in their societies. Murphy (1965) has argued that societies supportive of cultural pluralism (that is, with a positive multicultural ideology) provide a more positive settlement context for two reasons: they are less likely to enforce cultural change (assimilation) or exclusion (segregation and marginalisation) on immigrants; and they are more likely to provide social support both from the institutions of the larger society (e.g. culturally sensitive health care, and multicultural curricula in schools), and from the continuing and evolving ethnocultural communities that usually make up pluralistic societies. However, even where pluralism is accepted, there are well-known variations in the relative acceptance of specific cultural, racial, and religious groups (e.g. Berry & Kalin, 1995; Hagendoorn, 1993). Those groups that are less well accepted experience hostility, rejection, and discrimination, one factor that is predictive of poor long-term adaptation (Beiser et al., 1988; Fernando, 1993).

Group-level Acculturation

With respect to group acculturation, migrant groups usually change substantially as a result of living with these two sets of cultural influences. Physical changes are often profound, frequently involving urbanisation, and increased population density. Biological changes include new dietary intake and exposure to new diseases, both of which have implications for the health status of the whole group. Economic changes can involve a general loss of status or new employment opportunities for the group. Social changes range from disrupted communities to new and important friendships. Finally, cultural changes (which are at the core of the notion of acculturation) range from relatively superficial changes in what is eaten or worn, to deeper ones involving language shifts, religious conversions, and fundamental alterations to value systems.

Psychological Acculturation Phenomena

The central line in Fig. 2 represents the five main phenomena included in the process of *psychological acculturation* beginning with group acculturation and individual *acculturation experience* and ending with some long-term *adaptation*. This process is highly variable for two main reasons. First is the operation of moderating factors (shown in Fig. 2 above and below the

central line, and with dotted lines indicating moderating effects). For policy reasons it is useful to distinguish between those moderating factors that existed prior to major acculturation taking place (and hence which cannot be much changed by public policies in the society of settlement), and those that may arise during the process of acculturation (and which are controllable, to some extent). These moderating factors attach both to groups and to individuals, and can be seen as both risk factors and protective factors, depending on their degree or level. Because they influence the course of events along the central line in Fig. 2 they will be discussed following presentation of this course. Second, variability in psychological acculturation exists because of the three differing views about the degree of difficulty that is thought to exist during acculturation, which were outlined earlier ("behavioural shifts", "acculturative stress", and "psychopathology").

The five main features of psychological acculturation have received many different names in both the general and acculturation literatures. However, there is broad agreement (see e.g. Aldwin, 1994; Lazarus, 1990, 1993) that the process of dealing with life events begins with some causal agent that places a load or demand on the organism. In the acculturation literature, these demands stem from the *experience* of having to deal with two cultures in contact, and having to participate to various extents in both of them; these intercultural contact experiences are the common starting point for all of the three conceptual approaches. In some cases these experiences represent challenges that can enhance one's life opportunities. In other cases they may seriously undermine one's life chances.

Second, individuals consider the *meaning* of these experiences, evaluating and appraising them as a source of difficulty (i.e. as stressors), or as benign, sometimes even as opportunities. The outcome of this appraisal is variable across the three approaches: when acculturation experiences are judged to pose no problem for the individual, changes are likely to be rather easy and *behavioural shifts* will follow smoothly. This process encompasses three sub-processes: *culture shedding*; *culture learning*; and *culture conflict* (Berry, 1992). The first two involve the accidental or deliberate loss of behaviours, and their replacement by behaviours that allow the individual a better "fit" with the society of settlement. Most often this process has been termed *adjustment* (Ward & Kennedy, 1993a), because the adaptive changes all take place in the acculturating individual, with few changes occurring among members of the larger society. These adjustments are typically made with minimal difficulty, in keeping with the appraisal of the acculturation experiences as non-problematic. However, some degree of conflict may occur, which is usually resolved by the acculturating person yielding to the behavioural norms of the dominant groups; in this case assimilation is the most likely outcome.

When greater levels of conflict are experienced, and the experiences are judged to be problematic, but controllable and surmountable, then the *acculturative stress* paradigm is the appropriate conceptualisation. In this case, individuals understand that they are facing problems resulting from intercultural contact that cannot be dealt with easily or quickly by simply adjusting or assimilating to them. Drawing on the broader stress and adaptation paradigms (e.g. Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), this approach advocates the study of the process of how individuals deal with acculturative problems on first encountering them, and over time. In this sense, acculturative stress is a stress reaction in response to life events that are rooted in the experience of acculturation.

When acculturation experiences overwhelm the individual, creating problems that cannot be controlled or surmounted, then the *psychopathology* paradigm is the appropriate one. In this case, there is little success in dealing with acculturation, sometimes resulting in withdrawal (separation), but sometimes involving culture shedding without culture learning (resulting in marginalisation).

Third, as we have noted, individuals engage in strategies that attempt to deal with the experiences that are appraised as problematic. These basic coping strategies can be understood in relation to the four acculturation strategies outlined earlier. Within the general stress and adaptation approach, other strategies have been proposed, and are linked to the notion of *coping*. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) have identified two major functions: problem-focused coping (attempting to change or solve the problem); and emotion-focused coping (attempting to regulate the emotions associated with the problem). More recently, Endler and Parker (1990) have identified a third: avoidance-oriented coping.

These analyses of coping may or may not be valid cross-culturally; Aldwin (1994) and Lazarus (1991) suggest that cross-cultural variations are likely to be present in these distinctions, and in which ones are preferred. One key distinction, made by Diaz-Guerrero (1979), is between *active* and *passive* coping. The former seeks to alter the situation, and hence may be similar to problem-focused coping. It may have only limited success if the problem lies in the dominant society, especially if there is little interest in the dominant group in accommodating the needs of acculturating individuals. Passive coping reflects patience and self-modification, and resembles the assimilation acculturation strategy. These strategies are likely to be successful only if the dominant society has positive attitudes towards, and is willing to accept, members of the acculturating groups. If attitudes are hostile, the passive coping strategy may well lead to unacceptable levels of exclusion or domination.

The fourth aspect of psychological acculturation is a complex set of immediate effects, including physiological and emotional reactions, coming

closest to the notion of *stress*, as a "reaction to conditions of living" (Lazarus, 1990 p.5). In terms of the three conceptual approaches (shifts, stress, psychopathology), when behavioural shifts have taken place, without difficulty, stress is likely to be minimal and personal consequences are generally positive. When acculturative problems (stressors) do arise, but have been successfully coped with, stress will be similarly low and the immediate effects positive; but when stressors are not completely surmounted, stress will be higher and effects more negative. And when acculturative problems have been overwhelming, and have not been successfully dealt with, immediate effects will be substantially negative and stress levels debilitating, including personal crises, and commonly anxiety and depression.

The last of the five main features of psychological acculturation is the long-term *adaptation* that may be achieved. As we saw earlier, adaptation refers to the relatively stable changes that take place in an individual or group in response to environmental demands. Moreover, adaptation may or may not improve the "fit" between individuals and their environments. It is thus not a term that necessarily implies that individuals or groups change to become more like their environments (i.e. adjustment), but may involve resistance and attempts to change their environments or moving away from them altogether. In this usage, adaptation is an outcome that may or may not be positive in valence (i.e. meaning only *well*-adapted). This bi-polar sense of the concept of adaptation is used in this framework; long-term adaptation to acculturation is highly variable ranging from well adapted to poorly adapted, varying from a situation where individuals can manage their new lives very well, to one where they are unable to carry on in the new society.

Adaptation is also multifaceted (Aycan & Berry, 1995). The initial distinction between *psychological* and *sociocultural* adaptation has been proposed and validated by Ward and colleagues (Searle & Ward, 1990; Ward, 1996; Ward & Kennedy, 1993a). As noted previously psychological adaptation largely involves one's psychological and physical well-being (Schmitz, 1992a), while sociocultural adaptation refers to how well an acculturating individual is able to manage daily life in the new cultural context. Although conceptually distinct, they are empirically related to some extent (correlations between the two measures are in the +.4 to +.5 range). However, they are also empirically distinct in the sense that they usually have different time courses and different experiential predictors. Psychological problems often increase soon after contact, followed by a general (but variable) decrease over time; sociocultural adaptation, however, has a linear improvement with time. Analyses of the factors affecting adaptation (to be discussed in the next two sections) reveal a generally consistent pattern: good psychological adaptation is predicted by personality variables, life change events and social support, while good

sociocultural adaptation is predicted by cultural knowledge, degree of contact, and intergroup attitudes; both aspects of adaptation are usually predicted by the successful pursuit of the integration acculturation strategy, and by minimal cultural distance (Ward, 1996; Ward & Kennedy, 1993b). With respect to *economic adaptation* Aycan and Berry (1996) showed that psychological and sociocultural adaptation were predicted by much the same set of variables as in Ward's studies, while economic adaptation was predicted by migration motivation, perception of relative deprivation, and status loss on first entry into the work world. Further studies are needed to elaborate this economic aspect of adaptation, and how it relates to the other two (see also Hauff & Vaglum, 1993).

We are now in a position to consider the *moderating factors* that exist *prior to* and those that *arise during* the process of acculturation. As noted earlier, although termed "moderating" (i.e. influencing the relationship between the main events in Fig. 2), they sometimes serve as "mediating" variables (i.e. intervene directly between the main events). Different empirical studies assign different roles to these factors; it is not possible at this point in acculturation research to unambiguously claim them to be one or the other.

Factors Existing Prior to Acculturation

Individuals begin the acculturation process with a number of personal characteristics of both a demographic and social nature. In particular one's age has a known relationship to the way acculturation will proceed. When acculturation starts early (e.g. prior to entry into primary school), the process is generally smooth (Beiser et al., 1988). The reasons for this are not clear; perhaps full enculturation into one's parents' culture is not sufficiently advanced to require much culture shedding or to create any serious culture conflict; or perhaps personal flexibility and adaptability are maximal during these early years. However, older youth do often experience substantial problems (Aronowitz, 1992; Carlin, 1990; Ghuman, 1991; Sam & Berry, 1995) particularly during adolescence. It is possible that conflicts between demands of parents and peers are maximal at this period, or that the problems of life transitions between childhood and adulthood are compounded by cultural transitions. For example, developmental issues of identity come to the fore at this time (Phinney, 1990) and interact with questions of ethnic identity, thus multiplying the questions about who one really is.

If acculturation begins in later life (e.g. on retirement, or when older parents migrate to join their adult offspring under family reunification programmes) there appears to be increased risk (Beiser et al., 1988; Ebrahim, 1992). Perhaps the same factors of length of enculturation and

adaptability suggested for children are also at work here: a whole life in one cultural setting cannot easily be ignored when one is attempting to live in a new setting.

Gender has variable influence on the acculturation process. There is substantial evidence that females may be more at risk for problems than males (e.g. Beiser et al., 1988; Carballo, 1994). However, this generalisation probably itself depends on the relative status and differential treatment of females in the two cultures: where there is a substantial difference, attempts by females to take on new roles available in the society of settlement may bring them into conflict with their heritage culture (e.g. Moghaddam, Ditto, & Taylor, 1990; Naidoo 1992; Naidoo & Davis, 1988), placing them at risk.

Education appears as a consistent factor associated with positive adaptations: higher education is predictive of lower stress (Beiser et al., 1988; Jayasuriya et al., 1992). A number of reasons have been suggested for this relationship. First, education is a personal resource in itself: problem analysis and problem solving are usually instilled by formal education and likely contribute to better adaptation. Second, education is a correlate of other resources, such as income, occupational status, support networks etc., all of which are themselves protective factors (see later). Third, for many migrants, education may attune them to features of the society into which they settle; it is a kind of pre-acculturation to the language, history, values, and norms of the new culture.

Related to education is one's place in the economic world. Although high status (like education) is a resource, a common experience for migrants is a combination of status loss and limited status mobility (Aycan & Berry, 1996). One's "departure status" is frequently higher than one's "entry status"; credentials (educational and work experience) are frequently devalued on arrival (Cumming, Lee, & Oreopoulos, 1989). Sometimes this is due to real differences in qualifications, but it may also be due to ignorance and/or prejudice in the society of settlement, leading to status loss, and the risk of stress. For similar reasons, the usual main goal of migration (upward status mobility) is thwarted, leading again to risk for various disorders, such as depression (Beiser, Johnson, & Turner, 1993). In a sense, these problems lie in personal qualities brought to the acculturation process, but they also reside in the interaction between the migrant and the institutions of the society of settlement; hence, problems of status loss and limited mobility can usually be addressed during the course of acculturation.

Reasons for migrating have long been studied using the concepts of *push/pull motivations* and *expectations*. As we noted earlier, Richmond (1993) has proposed that a reactive–proactive continuum of migration motivation be employed, in which push motives (including involuntary or forced migration, and negative expectations) characterise the reactive end of the dimension, while pull motives (including voluntary migration and

positive expectations) cluster at the proactive end. Such a single dimension allows for more concise conceptualisation and ease of empirical analysis. Viewing previous research in this light permits some generalisations about the relationship between motives and stress and adaptation. For example, Kim (1988) found that, as usual, those with high "push" motivation had more psychological adaptation problems. However, those with high "pull" motivation had almost as great a number of problems. It appears that those who are reactive are more at risk, but so too are those who are highly proactive; it is likely that these latter migrants had extremely intense or excessively high (even unrealistic) expectations about their life in the new society, which were not met, leading to greater stress.

Cultural distance (how dissimilar the two cultures are in language, religion etc.), too, lies not uniquely in the background of the acculturating individual but in the dissimilarity between the two cultures in contact. The general and consistent finding is that the greater the cultural differences, the less positive is the adaptation. This is the case for sojourners and immigrants (Ward & Kennedy, 1992; Ward & Searle, 1991) and for indigenous people (Berry, 1976). Greater cultural distance implies the need for greater culture shedding and culture learning, and perhaps large differences trigger negative intergroup attitudes, and induce greater culture conflict leading to poorer adaptation.

Personal factors have also been shown to affect the course of acculturation. In the personality domain, a number of traits have been proposed as both risk and protective factors, including locus of control and, introversion/extraversion (Ward & Kennedy, 1992), and self-efficacy (Schwarzer, Hahn, & Schröder, 1994). However, consistent findings have been rare, possibly because, once again, it is not so much the trait by itself but its "fit" with the new cultural setting that matters. Kealey (1989) has advocated such a person × situation approach to studying sojourner adaptation.

One finding (Schmitz, 1994), among a group of immigrants to Germany, is that stress reaction styles are related to a person's preferred acculturation strategy. Using the Grossarth-Maticek and Eysenck (1990) Psycho-Social Stress Inventory, the "Approach" style was positively related to a preference for Assimilation, "Avoidance" to Separation, "Flexible" to Integration, and "Psychopathology" to Marginalisation.

Factors Arising During Acculturation

It is now clear that the *phase* of acculturation needs to be taken into account if stress and adaptation are to be understood. That is, how long a person has been experiencing acculturation strongly affects the kind and extent of problems. The classical description of positive adaptation in relation to time

has been in terms of a U-curve: Only a few problems are present early, followed by more serious problems later, and finally a more positive long-term adaptation is achieved. However, there is little empirical evidence for such a standard course, nor for fixed times (in terms of months or years) when such variations will occur. Church (1982, p.452) has concluded that support for the U-curve is "weak, inconclusive and overgeneralized", although there are occasional longitudinal studies suggesting fluctuations in stress over time (e.g. Beiser, 1994; Hurh & Kim, 1990; Klineberg, 1980; Ward & Kennedy, 1995; Zheng & Berry, 1991).

An alternative to a fixed, stage-like conceptualisation of the relationship between length of acculturation and problems experienced is to consider the specific nature of the experiences and problems encountered as they change over time (e.g. initially learning a language, obtaining employment and housing, followed by establishing social relationships and recreational opportunities) and the relationship of such problems to the personal resources of the migrant and to opportunities in the society of settlement (Ho, 1995). This approach emphasises the high degree of variability to be expected over the time course from initial contact to eventual long-term adaptation.

Acculturation strategies have been shown to have substantial relationships with positive adaptation: integration is usually the most successful; marginalisation is the least; and assimilation and separation strategies are intermediate. This pattern has been found in virtually every study, and is present for all types of acculturating groups (Berry, 1990a; Berry & Sam, 1996). Why this should be so, however, is not clear. In one interpretation, the integration strategy incorporates many of the other protective factors: a willingness for mutual accommodation (i.e. the presence of mutual positive attitudes, and absence of prejudice and discrimination—see later); involvement in two cultural communities (i.e. having two social support systems—see later); and being flexible in personality. In sharp contrast, marginalisation involves rejection by the dominant society, combined with own-culture loss; this means the presence of hostility and much reduced social support. Assimilation involves own-culture shedding (even though it may be voluntary), and separation involves rejection of the dominant culture (perhaps reciprocated by them). In the simplest version of this explanation, in terms of Fig. 1, integration involves two positive orientations, marginalisation involves two negative ones, while assimilation and separation involve one positive and one negative relationship.

Another possible reason for the finding that Integration is the most adaptive strategy is that most studies of the relationship between acculturation strategies and adaptation have been carried out in multicultural societies. That is, there could be benefits to persons matching

their acculturation strategies to that generally advocated and accepted in the larger society. However, in recent studies in societies that are more "Melting Pot" or assimilationist in orientation, the Integration strategy remained the most adaptive (and conversely marginalisation was the least adaptive) strategy. For example this was the case among Indian immigrants to the USA (Krishnan & Berry, 1992), and Third World immigrant youth in Norway (Sam & Berry, 1995); and Schmitz (1992b, p.368), working with a variety of immigrant groups in Germany, concluded that "The findings suggest that integration seems to be the most effective strategy if we take long term health and well-being as indicators".

Related to acculturation strategies are the coping strategies discussed earlier. Some empirical evidence supports the relationship between coping and acculturation strategies. For example, in the same study Schmitz (1992b) found, using the three coping styles identified by Endler and Parker (1990) that integration is positively correlated with task orientation, segregation is positively correlated with emotion and avoidance orientation, and assimilation is positively correlated with both task and emotion orientation, but negatively with avoidance orientation. And, as we have just noted, these strategies were related to health outcomes for immigrants to Germany.

In the field of psychological well-being generally, the variable of social support has been widely studied (Lin, Dean, & Ensel, 1986). Its role in adaptation to acculturation has also been supported (e.g. Furnham & Alibhai, 1985; Furnham & Shiekh, 1993; Jayasuriya et al., 1992; Vega & Rumbaut, 1991). For some, links to one's heritage culture (i.e. with co-nationals) are associated with lower stress (e.g. Vega, Kolody, Valle, & Weir, 1991; Ward & Kennedy, 1993b), for others links to members of the society of settlement are more helpful, particularly if relationships match one's expectations (e.g. Berry & Kostovcik, 1990); but in most studies, supportive relationships with both cultures are most predictive of successful adaptation (Berry et al., 1987; Kealey, 1989). This latter finding corresponds to observations made earlier about the advantages of the integration strategy.

It has been widely reported that the experience of prejudice and discrimination has a significant negative effect on a person's well-being (e.g. Fenton, 1989; Halpern, 1993). In groups experiencing acculturation this can be an added risk factor (Beiser et al., 1988). Murphy (1965) has argued that such prejudice is likely to be less prevalent in culturally plural societies, but it is by no means absent (e.g. Berry & Kalin, 1995). Indeed Fernando (1993) has designated racism as the most serious problem and risk factor facing immigrants and their mental health.

SUMMARY

Research in the domains of immigration, acculturation, and adaptation, as sampled and outlined in this article, has provided some rather consistent and potentially applicable findings. This consistency is remarkable, as acculturation is one of the most complex areas of research in cross-cultural psychology. It is complex, in part, because the process involves more than one culture, in two distinct senses: acculturation phenomena result from contact between two or more cultures; and research on acculturation has to be comparative (like all cross-cultural psychology) in order to understand variations in psychological outcomes that are the result of cultural variations in the two groups in contact. This complexity has made the reviewing of the field both difficult and selective. The framing of the field (in Figs. 1 and 2) was an attempt to provide a structure that could identify the main features of acculturation phenomena (the "skeleton"), and into which illustrative studies could be inserted (bits of "flesh"). The questions naturally arise: to what extent are these findings generalisable to other cultures; and what research still needs to be accomplished in order to apply them?

The empirical studies available do seem to point to some consistent findings. First, psychological acculturation is influenced by numerous group-level factors in the society of origin and in the society of settlement. What led the acculturating group to begin the process (whether voluntary, whether on their own lands or elsewhere) appears to be an important source of variation in outcome. However, other factors have also been identified as contributing: national immigration and acculturation policies, ideologies and attitudes in the dominant society, and social support. These population-level variables seem to be important in many studies, across many societies. However, their relative contributions will be likely to vary according to the specific acculturative context being considered. That is, they may be examples of a set of *universal* factors, ones that operate everywhere, but whose specific influence will vary in relation to features of the particular cultures in contact.

What is still needed are systematic comparative studies that will take these population-level factors into account in a research design (see Berry et al., 1987, for such a proposed design). For example, a single acculturating group (e.g. Chinese) who experience acculturation as members of refugee, immigrant, sojourner, and ethnocultural groups, could be studied in societies with assimilationist, integrationist, and segregationist policies; and within these settings, variations in ethnic attitudes and social support could be incorporated. Until now, we have had to rely mostly upon sporadic ("one shot") studies of single acculturating groups, in single societies of settlement, with no control over other possibly important factors contributing to psychological acculturation.

Second, psychological acculturation is influenced by numerous individual-level factors. In particular, the integrationist or bi-cultural acculturation strategy appears to be a consistent predictor of more positive outcomes than the three alternatives of assimilation, separation, or especially marginalisation. The availability and success of such a dual adaptation strategy, of course, depends on the willingness of the dominant society to allow it, and the wish of co-ethnics to pursue it. Thus, there is an apparent interaction between population-level and individual-level factors in contributing to psychological adaptations. But even in societies that tend towards assimilation policies, there was evidence that immigrants and ethnocultural group members generally prefer integration, and when they do, they tend to make more positive adaptations. Whether such a finding is valid for all groups acculturating to all dominant societies is an important question for researchers, policy makers, and those involved in counselling acculturating individuals. Once again, systematic comparative studies are essential to answer this question.

Third, how are the personal outcomes of the acculturation process to be interpreted? Are they a matter of acquiring essential social skills (making some rather easy behavioural shifts), of coping with stressors in order to avoid acculturative stress, or of succumbing to problems so serious that psychopathology will result? In this review, there is evidence that all three conceptualisations are valid, but that they may constitute a sequence or hierarchy of outcomes: if sufficient behavioural shifts (involving new culture learning and former culture shedding) are demanded, but do not occur, stressors may appear in the daily intercultural encounters that require appraisal and coping in order to prevent acculturative stress; and if these difficulties prove to be insurmountable, then psychopathologies may result. Because of the differing theoretical approaches taken by different researchers in their studies, such a conclusion has not been possible to draw from any one study. What is required are large-scale, longitudinal studies, carried out comparatively, in which all three conceptualisations are combined. In the meantime, it is possible to say on the basis of this review that most acculturating individuals make rather positive adaptations (i.e. there is not widespread psychopathology in evidence), but that the acculturative transition is not always an easy one (i.e. changing one's culture presents challenges that are not easy to overcome). Immigration and acculturation are a risk, but risk is not destiny (Beiser et al., 1988).

APPLICATIONS

As virtually all of the factors identified in this review are under human control, they should be amenable to change, guided by informed policy and programme development. The contribution by cross-cultural psychologists

to understanding these factors has been substantial, but much work remains to be done, both with respect to research, and to communicating our findings and conclusions to acculturation policy and programme developers, and to acculturating groups and individuals themselves. There are a number of points of entry, and hence of application, using the findings reviewed in this article. These points reside in both the society of origin and the society of settlement, and at both the group and individual levels.

In the society of origin, little can be done at the group level. However, at the individual level, some programmes involving pre-departure counselling and training, as well as realistic goal setting are possible in many cases (Aron, 1992). Considerable evidence is now available to support the implementation of such prevention programmes (Tousignant, 1992), both prior to and after migration.

Most action can be taken, and most successes can be realised, in the society of settlement. At the group level, there is now sufficient psychological evidence to support the development of national policies that neither force culture shedding (assimilation), nor ghettoisation (segregation), or some combination of them (leading to marginalisation). Instead a policy "balancing act" between these alternatives (the policy option termed "integration" here) can be sought (Berry, 1984, 1991). In addition, public education and social legislation can promote an appreciation of the benefits of pluralism, and of the societal and personal costs of prejudice and discrimination to everyone. National studies of knowledge about and attitudes towards multiculturalism and specific ethnocultural groups among all residents can assist in monitoring progress towards these goals (e.g. Berry & Kalin, 1995). Institutional change, involving increased diversity in education, health, and social services, has also been advocated, particularly for teachers and physicians (e.g. Karmi, 1992).

At the individual level, information about the protective benefits of cultural maintenance and social support can be disseminated through ethnocultural community interaction, thereby reducing the stresses associated with assimilation. At the same time, the benefits of seeking to participate in the national institutions (educational, work, judicial) to the extent desired, can reduce the stresses associated with separation. And advocacy of both can be conveyed to acculturating individuals, accompanied by information about the dangers of marginalisation that are likely when neither cultural maintenance nor participation in the larger society are achieved.

Perhaps most important is the advocacy of the view that acculturation involves *mutual accommodation* (i.e. integration as defined here). There are obvious costs to both sides: to the dominant society in changing school curricula and health services; to the acculturating group in shedding some

aspects of their culture that are valued but not adaptive. However, the costs of *not* adopting integrationist policies are likely to be even greater, especially if segregation and marginalisation are the end result (Berry, 1991; Roosens, 1988). The evidence presented in this article, I believe, clearly shows that people without a sense of themselves (i.e. a cultural identity of their own, rooted in some degree of cultural maintenance), and who feel rejected by others (facing daily experiences of prejudice and discrimination) are exposed to significant psychological costs in their own communities. Such a situation also imposes costs on the dominant society (in terms of social conflict and social control). Similarly, members of ethnocultural groups who do not attempt to understand and accept the core values and basic norms of the society of settlement risk irritating members of the larger society, again stimulating social conflict. The management of pluralism depends both on its acceptance as a contemporary fact of life, and on the mutual willingness to change.

Less negatively, the benefits of pluralism, maintained in part through integration, are numerous. Diversity in society is one of the spices of life, as well as providing competitive advantages in international diplomacy and trade. Perhaps most important is that from a social systems perspective, cultural diversity enhances society's adaptability: alternative ways of living are available in the social system when attempting to meet changing circumstances, due to changes in a society's ecological, or political, context.

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Immigrants' Perceptions of Host Attitudes and Their Reconstruction of Cultural Groups

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Commentary on "Immigration, Acculturation, and Adaptation" by John W. Berry

The acculturation of immigrants does not take place in a social vacuum; it occurs and unfolds itself within the context of intragroup and intergroup relations that provide at times the support and at times the challenge for the reconstruction of selves and identities. In his comprehensive and integrative review, John Berry points to the importance of contextual "societal" factors (subsumed under the "group-level" category in his acculturation framework) and their effects on individual adaptation. It is on an important component of this category of factors, namely the attitudes of the host (or majority) society towards immigrants and immigration, that I would like to elaborate in the first part of this commentary.

The examination of attitudes held by members of the majority culture towards acculturating groups has received relatively little empirical attention (Ward, 1996). It has been noted, however, that host attitudes can exert strong effects on immigrant adjustment. It is likely that public attitudes towards immigration affect policies dealing with the allocation of resources to newcomers. Berry refers to Murphy who suggested that societies supportive of cultural pluralism are more likely to provide social support